LEGENDS OF HALLOWEEN

OBSERVED AS "ALL SAINTS'" DAY, THOUGH OF PAGAN ORIGIN.

Customs Associated with It the Outgrowth of Ancient Superstitions—Interesting Folklore.

"Amang the bonnie winding banks,
Where Doon rins wimpling clear,
Where Bruce ance rul'd the martial ranks,
An' shook the Carrick spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did convene,
To burn their nits, and pou their stocks,
An! haud their Halloween."

All Saints, All Hallows, or All Hallowtide-day is supposed to have its origin in the conversion in the seventh century of the Pantheon at Rome into a Christian place of worship and its dedication to the Virgin and all the maryrs. It was first celebrated on May 1, but this date was subsequently changed to Nov. 1 and under the designation of Feast of All Saints set apart as a general commemoration in their honor, and as such retained by the Anglican and American Episcopal churches. In Roman Catholic countries it is the csutom on that day to visit the cemeteries for devotions or for laying floral tributes on the graves of relatives.

But Halloween is without doubt of pagan origin, for nothing in the church's observance of the following day of All Saints can be said to be connected with the csutoms and practices with which it is distinguished. The pagan Saxons celebrated Nov. 1, called "The day of the Apple Fruit," to a goddess, who presided over fruits and nuts, and it is a curious fact that this date was also the great autumn festival of the sun, in thanksgiving for the harvest of the Druids, from whom, without doubt, our ancestors derived many of the superstitious ideas peculiar to the season.

The Druids were firm believers in the transmigration of souls. Every year, according to their belief, on the evening before the thanksgiving festival, Saman, the lord of death, called forth to final judgment the souls that had been assigned within the last year to occupy the bodies of animals. By means of charms, magic and sacrifices to Baal by their living relatives and by gifts to the priests for intercession on their behalf, the punishment of the wicked might be lessened. The usual sacrifices were calves and black sheep. In the remote districts of Ireland at this season a collection of bread, butter, cheese and eggs was taken from house to house, the fatted calf and black sheep were slaughtered and there was much baking of griddle cakes. There was also a presentation of lighted candles in honor of St. Colomb Kill, who became the Christian substitute for Saman, or the vigil of All Hallows day. Many years before All Saints' day the ancient Irish prayed to Saman in front of their lighted candles for the souls of dead relatives. Fires on Halloween are a relic of Druidical ceremonies and were finally replaced by the lighting of candles.

At Blanford Forum, in Dorsetshire, there was a custom, before the reformation, of ringing bells at All Hallowtide for all Christian souls. Bishop Burnet gives a letter from King Henry VIII to Cranmer against superstitious practices, wherein the vigil and ringing of bells all the night upon All Hallows day are directed to be abolished, and "the said vigil to have no watching or ringing." Early in the reign of Queen Elizabeth injunction ordered "That the superfluous ringing of bells at All Hallowtide and All Souls' day, within the two nights next before and after, be abolished."

Halloween was regarded as the time of all others when supernatural influences prevailed, and as a night set apart for the universal walking abroad of spirits, both of the visible and invisible world. On this evening it was thought that even the human spirit was able to detach itself from the body and wander abroad, while the gift of divination and the power asserted by Glendower of calling spirits "from the vasty deep" were his who chose to avail himself of the privileges of the occasion.

THE WALPURGIS LEGEND.

To the student of folklore and tradition it may be interesting to notice how clearly allied Halloween seems to be to the "Walpurgis night" of the Germans, the witch festival or assembling of the evil spirits on the summit of the Brocken, which was supposed to occur on the eve of May 1, curiously enough the very day originally dedicated to the Christian martyrs and saints. The Walpurgis legend being almost coetaneous and early associated with the latter day, it is very likely that in England the change to Nov. 1 of the festival day carried with it the superstitions attributed to the preceding night. Where church usages and traditions still survive Halloween is devoted to sports and practical jokes. Nuts and apples are very much in favor, the name "Nutcrack Night," prevalent in some parts of England, taking its origin from the former. In Scotland, where so many of these superstitions took firm root long ago, it was a popular belief (referred to by Scott in "The Monastery") that children born on Halloween were possessed of certain mysterious faculties, such as that of perceiving and also conversing with supernatural beings.

We must look to the "land o' brown heath and shaggy wood," which Burns immortalized, for the origin and preservation of many of these customs.

The initial Halloween custom among the Scotch peasantry was that of pulling the kail stock. The young people, blindfolded and hand in hand, went into the kail yard or garden, and each pulled the first stalk that came in his path, after which the company returned to the fireside to look at their prizes. In a footnote to Burns's poem, "Halloween," we have the following explanation of this custom: "If the stalk is big or little, straight or crooked, it is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any yird, or earth, stick to the root, that is the tocher, or fortune; and the taste of the custoc, that is, the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition. Lastly, the stems are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the persons whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing, the names in question."

In Ayreshire the "Three Luggies" formed an important feature of the Halloween sports. Three dishes were required. Clean water was placed in one, foul in another, while the third was left empty. Then each person, blindfolded, advanced to the hearth where the dishes were ranged, and dipped in the left hand. If he dipped in the clean water, the future wife would be a maid; in the foul, a widow; but if in the empty dish, it foretold no morriage at all. This was repeated three times, the dishes being changed each time.

The "Wassail Bowl," in which floated many colored fruits, nuts and popcorn, and around the edge of which hung delicate vines with red berries upon their stems, formed one of the most beautiful and interesting ceremonies of Halloween. Milk was the liquid which filled the wassail bowl, and superstition required that its color remain unchanged no matter what else were done to make it attractive. Before the contents of the bowl were served a queen or high priestess was chosen in the following manner. The half shells of English walnuts were hollowed out, and in each of them were placed tiny candles, which were made to stand upright by sticking them upon drops of wax. These "magic boats" were then set afloat upon a big tub of water, and the fortunate possessor of the best sailing craft became the mistress or high priestess of the evening's entertainment.

A MAGIC BOWL.

After the selection of the ruling spirit all present were invited to partake of the magic bowl. One by one each advanced to the table and with a spoon drew something from the depths of the vessel. Only one trial was allowed, and from the prize brought forth the high priestess foretold the person's fortune. To dip up a big apple meant that good things were in store for the lucky person all the year. But if only some popcorn and nuts were brought up there would be bad luck, which could only be averted by begging a slice of orange, which was the great prize of all, from some one more fortunate. A roasted chestnut, if burst open, meant a present soon, while a spoonful of them meant several presents.

The corn test, somewhat similar, is peculiar to America. A large basketful of corn is placed in one corner of the kitchen and to this every one must go with their eyes blindfolded and select an ear of corn. Those who get a fine healthy ear covered with a bountiful supply of husks are sure of success during the ensuing year, while those who are unfortunate in selecting small ears must not expect much of Dame Fortune. Here is an old corn song in vogue quite a long while ago:

A full ear brings its own good luck;
A tasseled ear much joy;
But yellow husk carries sad luck
To hapless girl or boy.

An ear that's short telleth a gift
To him that picketh it;
But if 'tis red, no gift, 'tis said,
Before his name is writ.

But he who liketh not his ear,
Can have another try,
Unlucky twice, unlucky thrice,
"'Tis fate! 'Tis fate!" they cry.

The apple was the fruit most in demand at these festivities and was used in many of the charms. "Bobbing for apples" was the most mirth-provoking of these sports. The apples were set afloat in a tub of water, into which the young people ducked their heads in attempting to catch an apple. A popular way of telling one's fortune was to peel the apple and throw the parings over the shoulder, when they were supposed to form the initials of the sweetheart. The seeds were counted to ascertain the particulars of the life of the married ones.

Another old custom still observed in some localities in England is that of hanging up a stick horizontally by a string from the ceiling and placing a candle on one end and an apple on the other. The stick is then whirled rapidly and the persons present are each led up to the revolving stick and made to snatch at the apple with their teeth, use of the hands being forbidden. It often happens that the candle comes round instead of the apple and the person is obliged to look sharp in order to avoid being scorched in the face or covered with grease. Still another custom in which the apple plays a prominent part is the following: Alone and with candle in hand the person goes to a looking glass, where an apple is eaten. Some traditions say you must comb your hair all the time. The face of your future companion will be seen in the glass, peeping over your shoulder.

TRYING A CHARM.

One of the Scotch customs was for the maiden to seek some place secure from prying eyes and there affix the core of a good-sized pippin behind the ears. Then in muffled tones she sang:

"Pippin, pippin, I stick thee there,
That this is true thou may'st declare."

Whichever core fell to the ground first implied a warning that the suitor whose name it bore was no longer to be encouraged. Still another game was to suspend the apple from the ceiling by means of a string. The apple was hung at about the height of a person. With hands tied behind him, he advanced to the swinging fruit and attempted to catch it in his mouth. While apparently simple, it was a most difficult feat, especially so if the apple were large and the person possessed of a small mouth. Still another custom is given. Apples are placed in a row before the fire and each named. If the persons for whom they are named are to live in peace and harmony there will be no "spattering" while they are cooking, but if they are noisy it presages much dissention during the married life. This custom is sometimes varied by using chestnuts instead of the fruit. Brand, in his "Popular Antiquities," says: "It is a custom in Ireland when the young women would know if their lovers are faithful to put their nuts upon the bars of the grate, naming them after their lovers. If the nut cracks or jumps the lover will prove faithful; if it begins to blaze or burns he has regard for the person making the trial. If the nuts named after the girl and her lover burn together they will be married." Burns refers to this custom in these lines:

"The auld guidwife's well-hordet nits
Are round and round divided,
An' monie lads' and lasses' fates
Are there that night decided;
Some kindle, couthie, side by side
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa wi' saucie pride,
And jump out—owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night."

Secrecy seems to be one of the requisites in most of these old charms. The hemp superstition required that the person who sought its revelation must steal out unperceived and alone to meet his fate. A handful of hemp was sown and harried with anything convenient at hand. The following lines were repeated: "Hemp seed, I sow thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true love, come after me and pou' thee." Then, by looking over the left shoulder, the person invoked would appear, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions give the following words: "Come after me, and show thee," in which case the future companion simply presents himself. In another form the harrowing is omitted, and the language used is "Come after me, and harrow thee." In Burns's poem of "Halloween" "Fechtin' Jamie Fleck" is made to say:

Hemp-seed, I saw thee
And her that is to be my lass;
Come after me and draw thee,
As fast this night."

The "sark sleeve" charm is thus described. "You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south-running spring or rivulet, where 'three lairds' lands meet,' and dip your left 'sark' or shirt sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake, and some time near midnight an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve as if to dry the other side."

There are many other charms connected with the observance of "Halloween," but the purpose of this article is to present those which are fast growing obsolete. In some sections of our country the young people have departed from the innocent diversions of "ye olden time" and regard the night as one for vandalism and unlicensed liberty with other people's property. This is much to be regretted, especially when a revival of these old customs would give "Young America" an opportunity for venting his suppressed animal spirits in an innocent, and at the same time a most delightful manner. "BEN-ARDYS."

WHEN GRANT MET LINCOLN.

The Memorable Event Occurred at a White House Public Reception.

Gen. Horace Porter, in the Century.

On the evening of March 8 the President and Mrs. Lincoln gave a public reception at the White House, which I attended. The President stood in the usual reception room, known as the blue room, with several Cabinet officers near him, and shook hands cordially with everybody, as the vast procession of men and women passed in front of him. He was in evening dress and wore a turned-down collar a size too large. The necktie was rather broad and awkwardly tied. He was more of a Hercules than an Adonis. His height of six feet four inches enabled him to look over the heads of most of his visitors. His form was ungainly and the movements of his long, angular arms and legs bordered at times upon the grotesque. His eyes were gray and disproportionately small. His face wore a general expression of sadness, the deep lines indicating the sense of responsibility which weighed upon him; but at times his features lighted up with a broad smile, and there was a merry twinkle in his eyes as he greeted an old acquaintance and exchanged a few words with him in a tone of familiarity. He had sprung from the common people to become one of the most uncommon of men. Mrs. Lincoln occupied a position on his right. For a time she stood on a line with him and took part in the reception, but afterwards stepped back and conversed with some of the wives of the Cabinet officers and other personal acquaintances who were in the room. At about half past nine o'clock a sudden commotion near the entrance to the room attracted general attention, and, upon looking in that direction I was surprised to see General Grant walking along modestly with the rest of the crowd toward Mr. Lincoln. He had arrived from the West that evening, and had come to the White House to pay his respects to the President. He had been in Washington but once before, when he visited it for a day soon after he had left West Point. Although these two historical characters had never met before, Mr. Lincoln recognized the General at once from the pictures he had seen of him. With a face radiant with delight he advanced rapidly two or three steps toward his distinguished visitor and cried out: "Why, here is General Grant! Well, this is a great pleasure, I assure you," at the same time seizing him by the hand and shaking it for several minutes with a vigor which showed the extreme cordiality of the welcome.

The scene now presented was deeply impressive. Standing face to face for the first time were the two illustrious men whose names will always be inseparably associated in connection with the war of the rebellion. Grant's right hand grasped the lapel of his coat; his head was bent slightly forward, and his eyes upturned toward Lincoln's face. The President, who was eight inches taller, looked down with beaming countenance upon his guest. Although their appearance, their training, and their characteristics, were in striking contrast, yet the two men had many traits in common, and there were numerous points of resemblance in their remarkable careers. Each was of humble origin, and had been compelled to learn the first lessons of life in the severe school of adversity. Each had risen from the people, possessed an abiding confidence in them, and always retained a deep hold upon their affections. Each might have said to those who were inclined to sneer at his plain origin what a marshal of France, who had risen from the ranks to a dukedom, said to the hereditary nobles who attempted to snub him in Vienna: "I am an ancestor; you are only descendants." In a great crisis of their country's history both had entered the public service from the same State. Both were conspicuous for the possession of that most uncommon of all virtues, common sense. Both despised the arts of the demagogue, and shrank from posing for effect, or indulging in mock heroics. Even when their characteristics differed, they only served to supplement each other, and to add a still greater strength to the cause for which they strove. With hearts too great for rivalry, with souls untouched by jealousy, they lived to teach the world that it is time to abandon the path of ambition when it becomes so narrow that two cannot walk it abreast.

The statesman and the soldier conversed for a few minutes, and then the President presented his distinguished guest to Mr. Seward. The Secretary of State was very demonstrative in his welcome, and after exchanging a few words led the general to where Mrs. Lincoln was standing and presented him to her. Mrs. Lincoln expressed much surprise and pleasure at the meeting, and she and the general chatted together very pleasantly for some minutes. The visitors had by this time become so curious to catch a sight of the general that their eagerness knew no bounds, and they became altogether unmanageable. Mr. Seward's consummate knowledge of the wiles of diplomacy now came to the rescue and saved the situation. He succeeded in struggling through the crowd with the general until they reached the large East room, where the people could circulate more freely. This, however, was only a temporary relief. The people by this time had worked themselves up to a state of uncontrollable excitement. The vast throng surged, and swayed, and crowded until alarm was felt for the safety of the ladies. Cries now arose of "Grant! Grant! Grant!" Then came cheer after cheer. Seward, after some persuasion, induced the general to stand upon a sofa, thinking the visitors would be satisfied with a view of him and retire; but as soon as they caught sight of him their shouts were renewed, and a rush was made to shake his hand. The President sent word that he and the Secretary of War would await the general's return in one of the small drawing rooms, but it was fully an hour before he was able to make his way there, and then only with the aid of several officers and ushers.

The story has been circulated that at the conference which then took place, or at the interview the next day, the President and the Secretary of War urged General Grant to make his campaign toward Richmond by the overland route, and finally persuaded him to do so, although he had set forth the superior advantages of the water route. There is not the slightest foundation for this rumor. General Grant some time after repeated to members of his staff just what had taken place, and no reference whatever was made to the choice of these two routes.

THE MONEY OF THE RICH.

Its Investment a Matter Not Worth While to Worry Over.

Harper's Weekly.

A tender-hearted little girl was listening to the story of an educated pig who escaped from a circus and fared forth along into the wide world. As he went on through the fields and began to get hungry he came to a tree covered with green plums. He wanted the plums. He looked up at them with growing eagerness. He rubbed against the tree and tried to shake them down, but they were too green, and would not drop. Then he stood on his hind legs and tried to reach those on the lower branches, but —"Oh, mother!" cried the little girl, "that's going to be a sad story! Please don't read any more!"

It is somewhat so with Mr. Godkin's dissertation, in a contemporary magazine, on the "Expenditure of the Rich." Mr. Godkin thinks that extremely rich people would better give over the practice of building immense country houses and invest some of their surpluses in public monuments instead. It seems a wise suggestion, but, after all, the plums are too green still to be shaken down, and the reading of the story is all too likely to be sad. The very rich seldom invest their spare money according to the suggestion of philosophers. They spend what they can on their own pleasures and comfort, give to what happens to interest them, and let the rest accumulate. It seems possible that what they save does at least as much good as what they spend or give, for that becomes capital, and capital accumulating in vast sums makes money cheap, quickens enterprise, develops the resources of the country, and takes bad bargains off the hands of the poor. One of the great uses we have for the very rich is to acquire and carry properties which poor people cannot afford to hold. To be sure, the rich only buy bad bargains at the market rate, and at that rate they are apt to be fairly good bargains; but the scarcer the rich are, and the more moderate their accumulations, the lower the market rates for bad bargains must be, and the worse the sacrifice for people who have to sell. There is not nearly as much occasion to worry about the surplus incomes that very rich people do not spend as most of us suppose. If it is spent it may be misspent, but if it accumulates in banks and trust companies it becomes part of the capital of the country and goes where it is needed.

The Way of It.

New York Mail and Express.

Candidate Bryan continues to thump the bankers on the slightest provocation. His own view is that it is a simple case of bank against mountebank.